

“GREEN SHEET”

Meeting: March 6-7, 2009

Agenda Item X: Adopt WAC 232-12-840 Hunting and fishing opportunities for terminally ill persons and amend WAC 232-12-828 Hunting of game birds and animals by persons with a disability –
Rule Briefing and Public Hearing

Prepared By: Dave Ware

Presented By: Dave Ware, Game Division Manager, Wildlife Program

Background:

The 2008 Legislature created RCW 77.32.565 that allows the Director to provide special hunting opportunities for terminally ill persons as authorized by the Fish and Wildlife Commission. The proposed rule authorizes the Director to implement this legislation by developing criteria for issuing special permits; transferring donated permits; and making agreements with private landowners for special hunting opportunities.

The proposed amendment to WAC 232-12-828 would authorize the Department, working with the Hunters and Fishers with Disabilities Advisory Committee, to develop criteria for issuing special use permits. Currently anytime a person with a disability requests an accommodation that would allow them to participate in agency hunting or fishing programs, they must petition the Department. Then the Department must request a change or exception to a Commission rule to allow the accommodation. There have been exceptions authorized by the Commission for use of crossbows during archery seasons to address upper body impairments, to use scopes on muzzleloaders for those with vision disabilities, and for exceptions to fly fishing regulations for fishers with disabilities. This proposal would direct the Department to develop criteria to evaluate needs and issue special use permits when necessary to accommodate special needs of hunters and fishers with disabilities.

Policy Issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

- Authorize the Director to implement RCW 77.32.565 to provide special hunting opportunities for terminally ill persons.
 - Direct the Department to develop and utilize criteria for issuing special use permits to hunters and fishers with disabilities.
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Public involvement process used and what you learned:

The Department conducted an extensive public involvement process to develop these three-year hunting season cycle recommendations. In June 2008, the Department received nearly 4,000 responses to a scoping survey that was developed to determine the major issues that were important to the public. After the initial scoping phase, the issues were refined and preferred alternatives to address those issues were developed. The alternatives were discussed at more than ten public meetings held throughout the state in August and September. Nearly 5,000 people commented on the Alternatives, which were presented at the public meetings and available online for approximately seven weeks. In early January, an email was sent to over 50,000 hunters announcing that the proposed recommendations were online and would be available for comment until February 20. A postcard was mailed to approximately 800 organizations and individuals informing them of the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed regulations.

Action requested (identify the specific Commission decisions you are seeking):

Take public comment. Adoption is planned for the April 2-3-4, 2009 Commission meeting in Olympia.

Draft motion language:

N/A

Justification for Commission action:

N/A

Communications plan:

- News Release
 - Hunting Pamphlets
 - Direct email to approximately 55,000 hunters
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